

Vietnam's Legal and Policy Reform Agenda: Achieving the Right Balance

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Key words: Land Policies, Land Law, Sustainable Development, Poverty alleviation

SUMMARY

Vietnam is committed to introducing a market orientated land administration system in accordance with the Doi Moi reform agenda. Since the early 1990's significant progress has been achieved in the development of land related legislation and policies. The challenge has been to develop legislation and policies that achieve a balance between rapid economic development, alleviation of poverty and the protection of the environment.

This paper describes the innovative approach taken in achieving the balance between these sometimes competing objectives, the roles that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the SIDA funded Strengthening Environmental Management and Land Administration (SEMLA) Programme have played in assisting the Government strike the balance and the benefits that are arising from this approach.

It will particularly focus on the reforms undertaken to the land legislative framework in support of the socio-economic objectives of the Government of Vietnam and the community participative approach adopted to fulfil the policy objectives of land consolidation for rural land holdings and the integration of environmental considerations into the land use planning process.

SUMMARY

Việt Nam cam kết đưa ra hệ thống quản lý đất đai hướng cơ chế thị trường theo lịch trình của công cuộc Đổi Mới. Kể từ những năm 1990 đã đạt được những bước tiến đáng kể trong sự phát triển các chính sách và pháp luật đất đai. Thách thức đối với sự đổi mới chính sách pháp luật là đạt được thế cân bằng giữa tăng trưởng kinh tế nhanh chóng, xóa đói giảm nghèo và bảo vệ môi trường. Bài viết này mô tả một cách tiếp cận mới được đưa ra để đạt được thế cân bằng giữa các mục tiêu cạnh tranh, vai trò của Bộ Tài nguyên & Môi trường và Chương trình Nâng cao năng lực quản lý đất đai & môi trường do SIDA tài trợ nhằm hỗ trợ cho nhà nước đạt tới thế cân bằng và những lợi ích nảy sinh từ cách tiếp cận này. Bài viết đặc biệt tập trung vào những sự cải cách cho khung pháp lý đất đai nhằm hỗ trợ cho các mục tiêu kinh tế - xã hội của nhà nước Việt Nam và cách thức tham gia của cộng đồng để hoàn thành mục tiêu chính sách dồn điền đổi thửa cho các hộ nông nghiệp và tích hợp sự quan tâm đến các yếu tố môi trường vào quá trình quy hoạch sử dụng đất.

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1. SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR LAND ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Vietnam – the Country

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is located in South East Asia and has borders with China, Laos and Cambodia. It has an area of 331,212 Sq Km, is shaped like an “S” with an over all length of 3,260 km and has a population of 84,685,000 and a population density of 255 persons / sq km.

It is a country that has challenging climatic conditions with high temperatures, monsoonal rains and strong winds that result in significant degradation of the environment through soil erosion and flash flooding and the need for high levels of expenditure to repair damage done on an annual basis.

The Vietnamese economy has undergone significant growth with the total GDP for the year 2000 being twice that compared with the 1990's and a real GDP growth rate of 7.5% per annum. Significant improvements in the annual average amount of agriculture production (~5%), industrial production (~16%) and for the service industry (~8%) highlights the success the country has had over the last two decades in terms of economic development. (Party Congress 2006)

1.2 Economic and Social Development Targets – 2006 to 2010

The recent 10th party congress (Party Congress 2006) identified a range of targets for the economic and social development of the country and also set clear environmental targets.

These targets are embodied into Vietnam's Socio-Economic Development plans and individual Ministry Five year plans. These objectives, targets and plans provide the strategic framework in which the land administration system of Vietnam must operate and assist in focussing the priorities for development.

1.3 Brief History of Land Administration in Vietnam

The land administration system in Vietnam has been evolving for a long time, with the first cadastral system and record keeping system being established by the Le dynasty in 1490 (Vo, 1997). The second cadastral system was established in 1805 by the Nguyen dynasty and the French established the third cadastral system in the mid-19th century when they started making cadastral maps with coordinates and setting up new land records.

Soon after the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (former name of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) was founded, Vietnam went into wars for 30 years between 1945 and 1975. A centralised planning economic model was then introduced which saw Land administration largely ignored in the 1975 - 1986 period.

In 1986 the State of Vietnam adopted a policy of sweeping economic reforms (the “Doi Moi” policy) and a move towards a market-orientated economy. The first Vietnamese land law after Doi Moi was approved by the National Assembly in 1988. After having been in operation for 5 years, some articles proved to be restrictive for economic development and the National Assembly approved a revisional land law in 1993, called the 1993 Land Law. This was a fundamental legislative reform package that included: 1) enterprises and international organisations being allowed to rent land, 2) Land Use Rights Certificates (LURCs) being issued to people who had long term and stable occupation of the land, 3) Land users being able to exercise the 5 rights of exchange, transfer, lease, inheritance and mortgage and 5) a mechanism being established to assess the value of land.

A nationwide four-level system of land administration was established; with the policy and legal framework being set by the General Department of Land Administration (GDLA) at the National level and the Provincial and local levels responsible to the State for land administration, survey & mapping and land use right certificate issuance.

A number of legislative adjustments have been applied over the years since 1993 in response to identified inadequacies and a new Land Law was introduced in 2003. The basic objectives of the 2003 land law are included in Appendix 1. GDLA was incorporated into the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) in November 2002 to support the Government’s policy of closer alignment and integration between the land administration and natural resources sectors.

2. DEFINING THE PROBLEMS FACING THE LAND ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

Since the early 1990’s there have been significant improvements to the overall Land Administration System in Vietnam. The legislative framework is now in place to support a real estate market and the operational aspects of the system are slowly being implemented across the 64 provinces in Vietnam.

There is however still opportunities for improvement and issues that need to be addressed to further enhance the system and the major ones are listed below.

2.1 Different Views on Land – is it an Asset (Property) or a Natural Resource

The most significant and foremost issue in land policy and legislation in Vietnam is one of misconception about the nature of land. Land is, in essence, a kind of resource; in the way that it is a natural endowment that human beings can make use of to meet their own needs.

However, once accessed, appropriated and exploited, such a natural resource begins to take on value. Thus "land - natural resource" becomes "land - property", with all the attributes of a property that is *owned* by those who access, exploit and appropriate it using their labour. Accordingly, within the territory of Vietnam, land should be defined as an "invaluable" national *property* under the absolute ownership of the whole Vietnamese people. (USAID, 2004)

However, in the Constitution and Civil Code, land is categorised under "Natural Resource". From a legal perspective, this is an erroneous starting point. Within the territory of a country, land should not be regarded as a natural resource, but rather as Property. Defining land as natural resource leads to a range of major shortcomings and as consequence has created some difficulties in property management and leads to restrictions on the rights of the land holder. The incorrect definition of land in Vietnam is the root cause of many shortcomings and negative consequences. Land is property and must be managed under the principle of property management. Land relations should be perceived and regulated as property relations, which is the only way to establish a sound system of land administration. (Butler, 2006).

2.2 Challenge of Developing a Market Economy with Socialist Direction

Since the beginning of the renovation process, almost two decades ago, the government of Vietnam has been steadily pushing for change across all policy areas, with the objective of building a market economy with a socialist orientation.

All land in Vietnam is owned by the state. This fact underlies all other concepts of the Land law, and much of the Land law is an attempt to achieve the benefits of a true land market within the constraint of state ownership. Individuals, households, enterprises, institutions and registered legal organizations, foreign and domestic, private or state-owned, have rights only to use the land, either for defined or unlimited terms, and with or without payment of rents to the state

The initial allocation of agricultural land to rural households, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was remarkably egalitarian. A privatization process of such a massive scale could have been vulnerable to capture by local authorities, especially given that land was Vietnam's most valuable asset at the time. And yet, there is clear evidence that the annual land allocated by communes was distributed evenly across households and that significant agricultural productivity has resulted with Vietnam moving from a chronic food deficit to being the World's second largest rice exporter. (World Bank 1 & 2, 2006) The next step was the process of transferring state enterprises into private or Joint-Stock enterprises in all areas of industry, agriculture and services. All State Owned Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises are being reviewed and non profit Enterprises will be demolished and land will be given back to the local authority for allocation for local people.

The Land Law 2003 has recognised the existence of a real estate market and regulates what types of land that can be traded in the market. However as part of the socialist direction, it

specifically prohibits land users from putting into the market land allocated/leased to them by the State to carry out investment projects.

It also recognises that the State must play a role in the development of this market and empowers the State body in charge of land to regulate the registration of real estate transactions; establish estate investment funds; establish related-service providers and to take measures to avoid speculation and protect participants in the market. (JSM 2003)

Achieving the right balance between an open market and Government control continues to be a challenge and to some extent creates a trial and error philosophy as there appears to be few successful models from other countries to follow.

2.3 Separate Land and Building Registration

The land law 2003 requires land registration offices to be set up in all provinces to register transaction on land. According to the Land Law all land parcels should be registered in one system under the land administration system; including any attachments to the land, such as buildings and forests. Whilst there has been a successful integration between the Land Law and Forest Protection Law, land registration is still a problem as a new Housing Law came into force from 1 July 2006. In the new Housing Law, urban land with a house should be registered separately and under the construction management system. To avoid this contradiction Vietnam is preparing a Property Registration Law.

2.4 Limited Understanding of the Real Estate Market

The dichotomy between the extent of government intervention, management of the real estate market, alleviation of poverty and generating revenue growth creates positive and negative influences on the real estate market. However there is little tangible evidence available to assess the current state of the real estate market. A comprehensive review should be made of the real estate market, of the factors influencing the real estate market, the extent of the informal and formal land market, associated revenue leakage and the identification of initiatives for improvement and future revenue opportunities based on a fee for service system and encouragement of land users to register land transactions as part of the formal system. (SEMLA 2004)

2.5 Limited Access to Land for SME's

The Government of Vietnam has had an active privatisation program, but the economy is still dominated by the state sector which accounted for 39% of output and for over 50% of total investment in 2002. Furthermore, while the foreign investment sector has been important for Vietnam's growth, it is the domestic private sector that has led economic development since 2000, with an annual growth rate of almost 20% (18.7% in 2003). For the domestic private sector to continue its growth, however, the Government will need to accelerate its efforts in establishing an enabling business environment in Vietnam. (ADB 2004)

While infrastructure and natural endowments play important roles in private sector development, concentrating on changes in the regulatory framework to stimulate private sector investment is a far more feasible solution in the short term that may generate higher tax revenues for investment in infrastructure and human capital improvements down the road.

Access to land for business development is a problem across the country and the process for allocation of land is slow and tedious. MoNRE acknowledges that the priority to date has been allocation of agricultural land and that not all provinces have met deadlines for completion of this task. As a result, the percentage of possible LURC issued to businesses is still low.

2.6 Large Informal Real Estate Market

The current policy of high taxes and levies on land and land transactions encourages continuation of an informal land market. Some commentators place the number of transactions in the informal market at as high as 60% of all transactions. It is difficult to measure because of the informal transactions are neither reported nor registered.

Suggestions have been made to remove most taxes and charges on land and transactions and replace them with a variable annual land tax. This potentially removes the barrier to entry and secondary transactions. (Roberts 2005).

A policy objective should be to greatly reduce use of the informal market, to reduce uncertainty about rights already held and to improve revenue collection by governments at all levels.

Exacerbating the problem is that creation of land registration documentation is not comprehensive and timely. Only some provinces have full documentation required by guidelines but almost all provinces still do not have up to date records about land transfers which is causing some problems with land users.

Another problem for the broader economy is difficulty in conversion from rural to urban land use. Price differentials between the two uses cause distortion in the market, working against purchasers of land use rights for urban use.

2.7 Difficulties in Striking a “Market” Value for Land

Due to the large number of informal transactions, it is difficult for Government to obtain sufficient sales information to determine values for properties that are close to “market” value. Also the value is influenced by the duration of rights of land use which is for a defined term depending on the use. Residential land use is long term (for ever). Agricultural use may range from 20 to 50 years. Non-agricultural rights are typically limited to 50 years, but can be as long as 70 years in targeted geographic or economic areas with slow rates of investment. In most respects a right of land use for a defined term is the same as a lease, except that it is always prepaid while a lease may entail an annual rent. As the term of the

LURC draws to a close, the “market” value of the property significantly diminishes, impacting upon the financial position of the land user.

3. VIETNAM’S APPROACH TO CHANGE

Whilst difficulties still need to be confronted, the pace and success of the land administration reform process is a credit to the Government and leaders of relevant organisational units. The success is largely due to the way the Vietnamese have gone about *Shaping the Change*.

3.1 Clear Policy Direction

Vietnam has developed a substantial amount of policies and objectives that provide the strategic framework within which the land administration system must evolve. Poverty reduction, economic development and environmental management are the primary policy focuses that impact upon the management of the land resource and are articulated in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS 2003) for Vietnam.

Whilst pursuing rapid economic development, the Government has incorporated environmental considerations into its land use planning regulatory framework and processes. In turn, land administration controls allocation and transfer of land in accordance with land use plans. The Government’s introduction of the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) into the Land Use Planning process is a clear recognition of their policy of sustainable development. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment’s 5 year plan 2006-2010 (MoNRE 2005) has also embodied these principles.

The importance of local communities and other stakeholders participation in land use decision-making and their right to have access to relevant land use information to assess the performance of government operations in implementing these decisions are included as part of the policy framework.

This approach requires maintaining **a delicate balance between economic growth and social and environmental outcomes**. The implementation of this balancing act resolves itself into the amount of control exercised by government versus the efficient and effective operation of the marketplace. Importantly any activities related to land allocation and land transactions must recognise land in Vietnam from both an economic and a social good perspective.

3.2 Embodiment of the Policy Framework into the Legal Framework

The Land Law 2003 and the supporting Decrees (LL2003) have embodied these policies and provided the legal framework to support the progression towards the creation and operation of a land registration system¹ which includes land held by the State Agencies, individuals,

¹ However the Buildings are not currently recorded on the one Land Use Right Certificate and are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Construction.

households, ethnic communities, religious establishments, overseas Vietnamese, foreign organisations with diplomatic functions and foreign organisations investing in Vietnam.

There has also been relaxation of some of the rules relating to foreign investment especially in the areas of the Industrial, Hi Tec and Economic zones as well as residential investment and construction in the apartment market.

Overseas Vietnamese have been given some additional rights and opportunities to invest and have become closer to the rights of a Vietnamese person living in Vietnam. This has created a more even playing field for both overseas Vietnamese and foreign organisations.

Generally speaking, subject to certain conditions (LL 2003) and depending on who the land users are, the type of land use and whether the full amount for the land allocation or lease has been paid upfront; the right to exchange, transfer, mortgage, lease, inherit etc within a land registration system are now embodied in the land law that supports the operation of a real estate market in Vietnam. (Roberts 2005), Farmer (2005)

The holistic legal and policy approach has enabled Vietnam to rapidly progress towards opening up their real estate market whilst continuing to provide the socialist direction through their law and policies

3.3 Managed Stages in the Evolution to the Real Estate Market

Vietnam has recognised that a successful transition to a market economy needs to be carefully managed in a series of stages, governed by the policies and the laws of the land. The Government, assisted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (previously the General Department of Land Administration) has so far undertaken the following reforms:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Major Reform</i>	<i>Implications</i>
Pre 1986	Central Controlled and commune based Land Use	Little incentive to productively use land
1986	Doi Moi reform process agreed at Party Congress	Start of transition to Market Economy with socialist direction
1993	Macroeconomic stability package and introduction of 5 rights in Land Law (Bengt, 1997,1998)	Individuals receive basic land rights and Govt commences issuance of LURCs
2000	Expanding international trade and new Enterprise Law	Organisations are able to use land as collateral for investment
2003	Revised land law, decrees and circulars	Enhanced land rights and establishment of the land registration system
2005	Amendments to Civil Code	Clarified legal contractual requirements for creating an interest in land

The lowlands and urban areas of Vietnam are clearly benefiting from this evolution to the real estate market. Further work is required to communicate and implement these reforms to

the upland communities as evidenced in the recently released Poverty Environment Nexus report (World Bank 2006) which highlights “*..legal framework improvements are one of the leverage points that have potential to improve sustainability of natural resource use and reduce poverty, but the poorest communities are largely by-passed by these improvements*”.

3.4 Alignment of Land Use Planning, Land Classification, and Land Use Rights

Unlike other countries, Vietnam has embodied land classification, land use and land rights into their land registration system and have incorporated these aspects into their Land Use Right Certificate. Whilst this has added complexity to the land registration system and increased the maintenance implications for the LURCs, it has provided a clear mechanism by which the Government’s land policies directly influence the land user and provides the degree of control being sought as part of the Government policy.

3.5 Participative Approach to Land Consolidation Program

In most “Land Titling Projects” in other countries there has been a large emphasis on the adjudication process to determine the legitimate claims to land. In Vietnam, the priority has been to move from a commune managed right to individual land use rights, and as such there has been a need to undertake a comprehensive land allocation process as part of the 1st step towards land registration.

Initial land allocation was based upon an equitable distribution of land parcels to all individuals based upon the soil quality. This resulted in one householder have many land parcels dispersed over a large geographic area. The resultant impact upon productivity was substantial and the Government is therefore now undertaking a land consolidation process.

The key to the success of this land consolidation process (Trung 2006) has been the participatory approach being adopted by the Peoples Committees and the need for agreement by two thirds of the land users to the new allocations.

3.6 Decentralisation of Land Administration Functions

In line with modern management practise, Vietnam has clearly allocated responsibility for the land administration and land registration system. The national level develops the policies and legislative frameworks and the provincial or local level undertake the operational aspects of the systems.

There has been a further separation of responsibility for land allocation, leasing and land registration at the local level. Organisations, overseas Vietnamese and foreign individuals must interact with the Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment whilst Vietnamese householders and individuals must interact with the relevant district Office of Natural Resources and Environment. This has been designed to have the more complex and politically sensitive cases handled at the provincial level whilst providing easier access to the land office for the majority of the land users by allowing them to transact at the District level.

3.7 Public Awareness Raising and Participation

The Vietnam Government strongly promotes the involvement of the people in the land administration system. The land law prescribes the need for local participation in the development of the land use plans, gender equity is addressed by requiring both husband and wife to be on the LURC and there are regular awareness raising initiatives conducted by MoNRE and the DoNREs. Even so, more awareness is required at the local level on the benefits of participation and the opportunities presented by the new land law.

Vietnam has adopted an innovative and open approach to engagement with the land users. Recently the Minister of MoNRE and its leaders and staff set up an online Q & A forum for the public to ask any questions over the Internet during one day. Over 5,000 questions were received related to the land sector and this has proven to be a valuable information resource to guide further improvements. Dr Dang Hung Vo, the Vice Minister of MoNRE has also participated in a 2 hour TV program where the audience could ask any land related question.

3.8 Utilisation of Tailored Technical Assistance

Since 1993 the Government of Vietnam has sought the assistance of overseas organisations and individuals to provide advice on the overall land administration reform process. The United Nations Development Program, in conjunction with the Government of Western Australia, commenced the inputs by undertaking a feasibility study to identify opportunities for improvements to the Land Management System. Since that time, a variety of donors have provided assistance, including AusAID, World Bank, ADB and especially Sida.

Sida adopted a long term strategy to assist the Government of Vietnam in the reform of the land administration and environmental sectors with a particular focus on the reduction of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development. This approach has delivered tangible benefits to Vietnam and allowed the lessons learnt from one project to be readily incorporated into the next project.

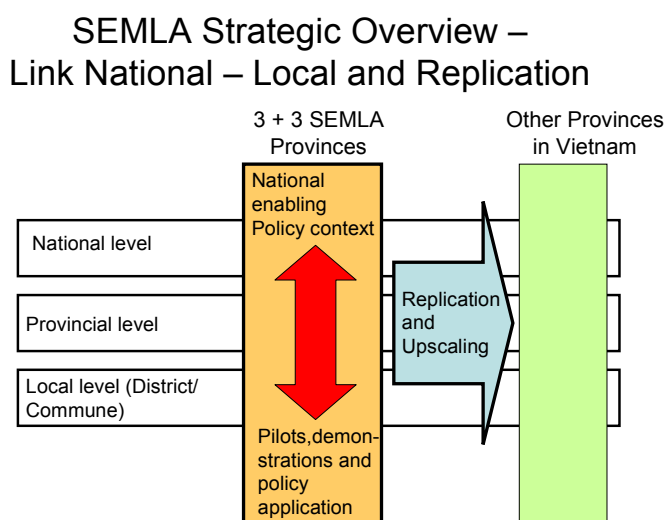
Sida is currently funding a 5 year Strengthening Environmental Management and Land Administration (SEMLA 2005, 2006) Programme (www.semla.org.vn) that's development objective is: *To contribute in meeting the demands and needs of the country in an efficient and equitable way, by having a Natural Resource and Environmental Management (NREM) system in place that supports:*

- *economic growth and poverty alleviation,*
- *sustainable development and environmental protection, and*
- *strong local governance and participation of the population in decision making processes*

The Government of Vietnam and Sida has shown great foresight in having a programme that integrates the environmental and land administration sectors and then incorporates the cross cutting issues of public awareness, information management and capacity building.

SEMLA is supported by technical assistance provided by a consortium comprising Rambol Natura AB, the Government of Western Australia (DLI) and local Vietnamese partners.

To assist in **shaping the change**, the consortium has introduced the concept of Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) that have representatives from a broad cross section of Departments and the TAGs are responsible for the formulation and oversight of the implementation plans for the various sectors and their integration into the overall programme framework.



SEMLA has also a strong link between the policy and legislative framework at the national level and its application at the provincial and local level.

This is achieved by conducting of pilot initiatives and activities at the local level that test the draft policies and guidelines in a practical setting before embodying them into the legislative framework.

The resultant approaches and methodologies can then be replicated and up scaled across the rest of Vietnam.

The authors consider that this tailored approach to technical assistance is a model that should be used for future technical assistance.

4. EVALUATION OF THE LEGAL AND POLICY REFORMS

In order to assess the progression of the legal and policy reform agenda in Vietnam, the authors have utilised the “Framework for the Evaluation of Land Administration Systems”. (Steudler 2005).

Area	Aspects	Indicators	Assessment Pre 1993	Assessment 2006
Policy Level	Land Policy Principles	• Existence of a government policy for land administration	x	✓
		• Clear statements on land administration system role	x	✓
		• Existence of an independent land board	x	x
Policy Level	Land Tenure Principles	• Existence of formal recognition and legal definition of rights	x	✓
		• Security of Tenure (No and Solution of disputes)	x	✓
		• Social and economic equity	x	✓
Policy Level	Economic and financial factors	• Cost/benefit and fee structures, land tax revenues	x	x
		• Economic Indicators (Value and volume of land market)	x	✓
		• Funding and investment structure	x	✓
Management Level	Cadastral and Land Administration principles	• Adequate protection of Rights	x	✓
		• Support of Land Market (secure, efficient, simple, at low cost)	x	p
		• Clear responsibilities of departments and ministries	✓	p
Management Level	Institutional principles	• Central or decentral organisational approach	c	d
		• Private sector involvement, no and volume of contracts	x	✓
		• Standard arrangements, core data	x	x
Management Level	SDI Principles	• Access network, pricing	x	x
		• Data definition, modelling	x	x
		• Data properties (capture method, quality and accuracy)	x	p
Operational Level	Technical principles	• Data maintenance, timeliness	x	x
		• Adequate number of personnel (public and private)	x	x
External Factors	Human Resources	• Existence of professional associations	x	✓
External Factors	Capacity Building	• Sufficient number of universities and students	x	p
		• Funding structure for capacity building	x	✓
		• On-going education (no. of workshops, seminars)	x	✓
External Factors	Research and Development	• Existence of research institutions in the land administration field	x	✓
		• Application of open systems and methods	x	p
External Factors	Technology	• Regular review of new technologies on market and assessment of fitness for use	x	✓
		• User satisfaction indicators	x	✓
Review Process	Assessment of Performance	• Degree of satisfaction of objectives and strategies	x	✓
		• Existence of a regular review process	x	✓
			x	✓

(x – Not acceptable, ✓ - satisfactory, p – partial, c – central, d – decentralised)

In the majority of indicators, the authors have assessed that there has been substantial progress in a little over a decade.

This can be attributed to the commitment to change by the Vietnamese Politburo, the National Assembly and the leaders of MoNRE and the other land related Ministries. It is also a reflection of the carefully measured approach to reform adopted by the Vietnamese Land Administrators and the contributions made by the technical assistance programs over the years, particularly those funded by Sida.

5. CONCLUSION

Moving from a centrally controlled economy to a market based economy is an enormous challenge for any country. Vietnam recognises this and has been on a continuous journey of reform and improvement to its land administration system since the early 1990's.

Vietnam approach of progression in stages with clear policy and an evolving legislative framework has resulted in substantial liberalisation of the real estate market over the last decade.

Importantly, in progressing its policy and legislative reform programs, the Government of Vietnam, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, has focussed on achieving the right balance between rapid economic development, improved social wellbeing and enhanced environmental management.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Doi Duc Do holds a Bachelor Degree in Surveying and Mapping in 1978 from Moscow University of Geodesy, Aerophotogrammetry and Cartography, Russia and has a Master Degree in LIS in 1997 from Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia. Doi commenced working as a teacher at Hanoi University of Agriculture until 1986. In 1986 he started work for the Government of Vietnam in the Land Administration Department and has held a variety of positions, including a Senior Land Registration Expert and became Deputy Director General, Department of Land Registration Statistics in August 1998. As part of these roles he has been developing the model for Land Registration System for Vietnam. He has also managed a Project on Land Registration as part of the cooperation programme between Vietnam and Sweden on Land Administration reform as was the team leader on a pilot project in north central Vietnam which instituted an approach to land titling that gives both women, and men rights to use land supported by the World Bank in 2001.

Chinh Trung Dao holds an Engineer of Land Management degree from Hanoi University of Agriculture; completed in 1990 and a Master of Agriculture; Hanoi University of Agriculture; completed in 2004. Chinh commenced work in 1991 as an expert in the Department of Land Use Planning - General Department of Land Management and has held a variety of positions in the Department of Planning and Finance, Department of Legislation and Department of Land. He is now the Deputy Director General, Department of Land, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Vietnam. In this capacity he has responsibility for drafting laws, ordinances and other legal documents; coordinating awareness raising programs on land policy and legislation; conducting surveys on the impacts of land policy and legislation upon land users and the society; and for consolidating practical issues and experiences to recommend the revision or supplement to the land policy and legislation of Vietnam. He has also undertaken consultancy work in Laos for the World Bank.

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